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HARAMBEE AFRO-CULTURAL ORG.

COMING PROGRAMS

The following is a list of programs scheduled for H.A.C.O. meetings over the next few weeks. If you are interested in attending a meeting(s), as a participant or to present your own program, please contact us.

Feb. 9th.---A dual program on "The Black Family" & "Psychological causes and effects of racial self-hatred," presented by Fatisha Tabasuri & Jesse Ingram.

Feb. 10th.---A joint meeting of 1-11 Jaycee and H.A.C.O. members at which the guest speaker will be Haki Madhubuti, Black poet from Chicago and head of Third World Press. This program is made possible through the cooperation of the ~~African~~ Peoples Union at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Feb. 23rd.---An address by Gordon Parks, again thanks to the Afrikan Peoples Union.

March 2nd.---"Richard Pryor Live," one of the films from the BLACK CULTURAL CELEBRATION film series at U.N.L.

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For information about these programs and others, write:

Harambee Afro-Cultural Org.
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, Neb. 68502
(c/o Chico Wilson or David Rice)

AMERICA, TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF

A little over fourteen months ago, the American embassy in Tehran, Iran was taken over by Iranian students. The take-over was precipitated by the U.S. decision to accept the deposed shah into this country. When news of the take-over reached American ears, Americans became furious. America, which boasts about being the number one nation; America, which reaches out a helping hand to Third World nations; America, where all the people living within its borders lay claim to living in a free society; America, the watchdog, guardian angel of the world, held hostage by a little, unorganized, rinky-dink country.

How dare Iran?! Didn't the Iranians know who they were messing with? Public opinion in America showed its fury: "Let's nuke the sons of @'c*"... "Blow the (#?@#'- off the map"....etc. Much verbal abuse was thrown against the Iranian people. After all, they did kidnap Americans.

Americans are quick to get mad and go name-calling people of other lands. Such a tendency is particularly interesting in light of American history. Anglo forefathers accidentally ran into this country. Thinking they were in India, these forefathers mislabeled the true natives of this land "Indians" and have yet to correct that incredible error. Through trickery and might, these early Anglo-Americans took this land from the true natives and, in turn, called them "savages." Surely a people who ran around half-naked did not deserve such a vast and rich country as was this. Anglo-American imperialism had begun.

America was a land of opportunity, a great beginning for those who didn't mind a little hard work. But Anglo-

Americans didn't want to do all that hard labor. Why should they when they when the land was abundant with "Indians"? But these natives, ingrates that they were, did not take well to servitude, to having their land "discovered" out from under them. They fought. If that failed, they fled. When all else failed, they would die off.

But Anglo-Americans did not resign themselves to having to do the needed work, despite the "Indians'" recalcitrance. There was a country of "coloreds" who were more wild, more uncultured, more primitive than even the "savages" of this continent. Good, Christian Anglo-Americans decided to "rescue" these Coloreds from the wilds of their African homeland, to "civilize" them, to give them good Christian religion, and put shoes on their feet. In exchange for this wealth of good deeds, the imported Coloreds were expected to do some chores, chores by which America was to become rich and prosperous. When Coloreds like Nat Turner, Denmark Vessey, Prince Hall, and others made it clear that they were not appreciative, the paternalistic "colored" lost its popularity to the resentful "nigger" label. And these Niggers, unfamiliar with the land, were kept in bondage. By their labor, American capitalism was on a firm footing. There was money to be made.

Good Anglo-Americans, always thinking of people, wanted others to participate in the good life. They reached over into China. There was no reason why the Chinese shouldn't reap the benefits of work in a rich and prosperous land. Businessmen put the Chinese to work on the railroads. Sure, they weren't paid what the Anglo-American laborers were paid; but, after all, America had paid for their boat ride and given them the opportunity to call themselves "Americans." But all was not bliss. Chinese labor was putting Anglo-Americans out of work. American temper flared. The Chinese became "chinks," "tight eyes,"

etc.

World War II! The bombing of Pearl Harbor! Japanese Americans were placed in "relocation" camps--a sugar-coated label for the concentration camps which they were in actuality. America was at war with Japan, had to protect itself from spies and any potential internal Japanese uprising. But many of the Japanese were second or third-generation Americans. They were nonetheless whisked away to the camps and without compensation for their homes and businesses. Needless to say, these people were made to suffer Anglo-American wrath, vicious name-calling and labels.

We could further trace the steps of Anglo-American racism and imperialism; as the trail is certainly extensive, running throughout the entire Third World. But Iran, for purposes of this examination, is where the trail leads.

The Ayatullah Khomeini has been labelled everything from an insane religious fanatic to a mad dog. President Ronald Reagan has led the nation in the name-calling by referring to the Iranians as "barbarians." But whether the take-over of the embassy was right or wrong, America is hardly qualified to classify Iran as barbarian. Iran's wrath was not distributed at random. The release of the eight American black men and the five white women was a clear statement of Iran's awareness of American domestic racism and sexism. It illustrative of Iran's knowledge that non-whites and women have no say-so in the formulation of U.S. policy. The release of Vice-Counsel Richard Queen due to his ill health was hardly a barbarian act. After the ex-Shah's death, Iran only demanded from this country an apology for past interference in Iranian internal affairs and a pledge that no such interference would occur in the future and assets in U.S. banks that rightly belonged

to Iran. The fourteen-month stalemate was not so much a matter of money for this country. Rather, the U.S. government didn't want to lose face by apologizing, by admitting to its guilt. The U.S. attitude was, "We will never apologize, even if the Iranian accusations are true." America would rather have sacrificed the fifty-two lives than to have apologized.

What about the threat of Iran trying the Americans as spies? "Iran is searching for an excuse for holding the Americans." But Iranians produced documents that indicated that their claim was probably true, to which America replied that every country has spies, that the practice of spying is a generally accepted thing. Television networks did news specials to assure the American public that spying was commonplace. This was done to take the edge off the Iranian allegations.

Now the Americans are home and President Reagan is debating whether or not he should honor the agreement this country made with Iran. "We were under duress," Anglo-Americans cry. "We can't be bound by such an agreement." Jimmy Carter says, "Let's stick to our agreement. Let's not sink to Iran's level and show the world that American word is good."

Well Mr. Carter, whether President Reagan honors the agreement or not, this country will have all Iranians labeled as the scum of the earth for quite some time to come. It won't matter that not every Iranian participated in the taking of the American embassy or that all of them may not have supported the action. As Reagan says, "You are all kidnappers and barbarians."

Anglo-Americans, look at your own selves and look at your past. Climb off that ethnocentric, self-righteous high-horse because you are indeed the pot calling the kettle black.

-Al Holloway

THAT'S INCREDIBLE

In a prior issue of the FLAME I spoke of an incident which had taken place in the prison school in which a black prisoner, viewing some slides of Afrikan tribespeople, made disparaging remarks about them as if they were from another planet. At a recent H.A.C.O. meeting our members were informed by a black student at U.N.L. that there are problems on campus between native Afrikan students and Displaced Afrikan (persons of Afrikan descent who happen to have been born outside Afrika) students, problems stemming from an inability or unwillingness of these students to recognize their essential sameness.

That there would be problems between native Afrikans and Afrikans born here is understandable. There are tremendous cultural differences. And we both have certain negative images about each other based on media representations and individual experiences about which we may have made generalizations. Maybe too many native Afrikans have met too many Displaced Afrikans in this country who exemplify the worst in Anglo-American culture. Maybe too many Displaced Afrikans in this country have met too many native Afrikans who think they are better than we are because they are not descended from slaves. While I find it disgusting to see native Afrikans in the white man's suits and ties, I can readily understand the native Afrikan's puzzlement at seeing their American-born Brothers wearing cowboy hats. Yes there are problems that we have to work out.

Anyone of us can ask any white American what his or her nationality is and will get an immediate answer: "I am Irish," "I am Polish," etc. That any black man or woman in this country would deny his or her Afrikaness or that any native Afrikan would deny the Afrikaness of his American-born Brother or Sister is incredible!

-the editor

A brief and elementary sociology lesson:
An apple, whether on the tree or off, is
AN APPLE!

FROM CELLBLOCK "G"

Lost like a bird in the night,
caged in a box of steel,
seeking to find my freedom.

Early morning bells to
snap me from my cage to
send me on my wingless flight.

-Orlando Jackson

LETTER(s)

i sit on the ubiquitous concrete
and wait on another world
a missed missive from here
still.... i must remain calm
and not drift...
nor be afraid to choke on hurt.

-Willi Otey

THE BUREAUCRAT

stand back a ways
hold your tie in place
as i count you
to find out
to get it straight
just how you'll fit
in the cracks which we
so graciously have planned for you
rub your lapels down slick
and shove your hands deep in your pants
so that the pockets swell
from the affairs you
will wash your knuckles of
one day soon....

here come the noisy masses now
rushing
to get in from the cold
here are the buttons, baby
push them
put these people on hold.

-David L. Rice

THE MOOCH

Say, got a smoke
Sure need one bad
Just received a check
More money from my dad.

L

I

F

E

R

H

Y

T

H

M

S

How about some coffee
My throat is kind of dry
Next time I see you
I'll surely buy.

Can I use your razor
Want to save my blades
Hey, did I tell you
About the score I just made.

Just need a little after-shave
A drop of hair oil too
I know you've some money
Loan me one or two.

Got an x-mas package in the mail
Sure got treated right
That sandwich looks good
I'll just have a bite.

Well, got to go, friend
But how about another smoke
Maybe some more coffee
No I'm not broke
Got fifty in my pocket
A hundred in my cell
Just don't want to spend it
When I can mooch so well.

-Keith Ross

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You have an ongoing invitation
to submit your poems, other
creative writing, news or essay
items to: HARAMBEE FLAME

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